

**From:** Bob  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/28/02 1:16am  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Below please find a copy of an original post I made to Slashdot 11/2/2001 about Microsoft and the nature of the problem their behavior represents to the computing industry. You may read it directly here <http://slashdot.org/comments.pl?sid=23317&cid=2513826> but I have chosen to reproduce it here for your immediate use.

I feel that this analogy is very fair- operating systems ARE essentially program utilities that handle the allocation of system resources, and so competing against a company that is both your competitor and the power company puts that company in a position from whence a trust can arise (and has in the case of Microsoft). A breakup as envisioned by the original judge or a source code release free of limitations other than not being able to use the code for OS sales would be appropriate remedies.

I truly hope that you listen to myself and other computer professionals, and stand ready to explain my position and conclusions with anyone from the DOJ or any other government officer in order to facilitate a return to a balanced, competitive and useful software market environment.

I can be reached via this email address or at home, 972-437-6795.

Imagine if your local power company was a conglomerate that could also compete with your toaster maker company.

Microsoft Power & Light decides to change the voltages to everybody's home every three years, requiring a complete change to all the appliances and home systems. This suits you fine as it drives more toaster sales, so while you question the ethical validity of these changes, the havoc it creates and the incredible costs it imposes on the community, the business model is there- you are on board.

MSP&L tries to enter into the toaster market, but they can't make a toaster as good as you. You think all you have to do is continue to make a better toaster- you poor deluded fool.

MSP&L approaches you and says hey we will force all the homeowners to have a specific plug and voltage for toasters, sign up with us and we can guarantee you your share of the toaster market and we'll get our share. You don't dare refuse because the implied threat is that the proprietary toaster plug can be used to lock you out just as easily as lock you in. The consumers go along because you set the quality standards and if you are on board it must be an okay plug

standard, and besides those malfunctioning MSP&L toasters are mighty cheap. Now all of a sudden you are a 'strategic business partner', desperately hoping that MSP&L or an appliance giant will buy you out.

MSP&L has locked you into a standard under their control, but now some MS VP genius decides that toasters are strategic (it's not an appliance, it's ad-revenue!). They mess with the voltages every year so your toasters malfunction and their toasters work until you spend valuable design and retool time 'fixing' your toaster. They create SmarToaster technology that sends email recipes to their toasters to enhance the toaster experience and incidentally deliver ads, actually their real revenue stream in the toaster market. The convection/microwave people are destroying your upper-end toaster market, so you are totally squeezed. Then to finish you off, MSP&L gives toasters (which they finally have kind of working) to everyone during the next voltage change.

You are done for.

But hey our government is here for you! The DoJ comes by and says, gosh that's wrong, MSP&L cannot use their power monopoly to squash the toaster market, MSP&L play nice. MSP&L agrees, then builds the NeToaster standard that requires you to use a certified bread or pastry and you can't remove the ads.

ActiveOvenLife cries out for justice because they can't impose their own toaster standard on all the households. Now the DoJ says okay MSP&L, play nicer. Don't you feel good ex-toaster guy?

Hmmmm, maybe you should have lobbied for standard electricity settings instead of letting greed get to you, treated the power company as a monopoly utility and allowed everyone to build the best appliances that compete on their merits. Open source electricity standards and government-regulated power? That's just wacky and unAmerican!

The truly frightening thing is that if Microsoft continues to get away with this, the rest of the corporate world will follow suit and we will end up with crazy costs, financial and personal, in all sorts of real life situations like the above.

The excellent railroads, electricity, roads and telecommunications infrastructure that all Americans enjoy did not happen by accident. It was a combination of visionaries, greedy people and governmental community laws that gave us industries and standards that work.

If the Microsoft culture is allowed to dominate computing, then we will experience what our forefathers avoided by stopping railroad magnates or Standard Oil from controlling the lifeblood of our

nation. God help us if we have failed to learn those lessons.